



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Sports Medicine: Patellar Tendonitis (Jumper's Knee)

Jumper's knee, or patellar tendonitis, is a condition that causes pain in the tendon below the kneecap (patellar tendon). This is the tendon that attaches the thigh (quadriceps) muscles to the lower leg. It straightens the leg and controls the knee during bending or squatting.

Signs and Symptoms

- Pain, tenderness, and sometimes swelling just below the kneecap
- A crackling sound when the tendon is moved or touched
- Pain with jumping, squatting, or kneeling
- Pain and loss of strength when straightening the leg or rising from a seated position

Increased Risk

- Flat feet
- Sports with a lot of sudden movements like jumping, quick starts, and kicking (soccer, basketball, lacrosse)
- Running sports, especially down hills (cross country or track and field)
- Poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility)

Treatment

- Medicine
 - Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®), may be recommended. Take these as directed by your doctor or health care provider.
 - Other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), may be taken.

- Use of cold and heat
 - Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours and after any activity that makes symptoms worse. Use ice packs or an ice massage.
 - Heat should not be used on a new injury. It may be used before stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your doctor, health care provider, or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or warm soak.
- Orthopedic aids
 - Arch supports (orthotics) or a patellar tendon strap may be prescribed to reduce stress to the tendon.
- Rehab
 - Range-of-motion, stretching, and strengthening exercises are generally needed. Rehab with a physical therapist or athletic trainer may be prescribed to help.

How to Prevent

- Do correct warm-up and stretching before practice or play.
- Allow time for rest and recovery between practice and play.
- Maintain proper thigh and knee strength, conditioning, flexibility, endurance, and cardiovascular fitness.
- Wear orthotics for flat feet.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor, health care provider, or the Sports Medicine team at (614) 355-6000 if:

- Symptoms get worse or do not improve in 2 weeks, even with treatment.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop.

**To schedule an appointment with
Sports Medicine, visit
[NationwideChildrens.org/Sports
MedicineScheduling](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling) or scan this
code with your camera phone.**

